

WV STATE FIRE COMMISSION MEETING

Blennerhassett Hotel
Parkersburg WV
December 6th, 2024

PLEASE NOTE:

The following minutes have been provided and are considered unofficial, until they are submitted for approval at the next scheduled meeting.

The official business meeting was called to order at 9:00am by Chairman Grant Gunnoe

ROLL CALL: by Kathryn L Burns

Commissioners Present

Steven Byers, Dave Camp, Carl Eastham, Doug Estep, Edward George (call in), Grant Gunnoe, Phil Hart, Tom Keefer, Brian Jones, Doug Mongold, Jim Oldaker, Ted Shriver and Virgil White.

It is noted that Counsel Brandolyn Felton-Earnest is in attendance as well.

Commissioners Absent

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner George made a motion to accept and approve the minutes of the October 4th, 2024, Fire Commission Meeting, seconded by Commissioner White. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

RECOGNITION: The Fire Commission observed a moment of silence in memory of Lt. Jeremy Taylor.

None

SFMO & DIVISIONAL REPORT:

Marshal Tyree gave the Inspections/Plan Review, Services and Investigations Report, and his Operations report to the Commission containing staffing, legislative, updates, and fire department funding loss updates.

Entertained Questions – None

At this time Chairman Byers recognized the outcome of the Sound the Alarm event in Monongalia County. During this event 120 homes were visited with 250 Smoke Alarms being installed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Legislative and Grant Committees did not meet.

Fire Department Services Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Minutes

December 5th, 2024

Call to Order

Commissioner Oldaker called to order the regular meeting of the Fire Department Services Committee at 10:00AM on December 5th, 2024 at the Blennerhassett Hotel, Parkersburg WV.

Roll Call

The following commissioners were present:

Steven Byers (call in)

Jim Oldaker

Phil Hart

Brian Jones

Dave Camp

Doug Mongold

Grant Gunnoe

The following commissioners were absent:

None

Unfinished Business

1. Consideration of Fayette County Fire Prevention Unit Request to be Recognized as a Fire Department.

Tabled at October meeting per Fayette County Fire Prevention Unit's request. To be carried over to the February 2025 meeting.

New Business

1. Consideration of Temporary Fire Officer Certifications.

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott presented the following applications for approval.

- a) Dave Fletcher

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission to approve the temporary certification as listed, seconded by Commissioner Jones. With all the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

2. Consideration of Fire Chief Applications

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott presented the following applications for approval.

- a) Dave Fletcher (Belle)
- b) Samantha Bice (Cheat Lake)
- c) Joseph Risten (McMechen)
- d) Theodore Sines (Jefferson County)
- e) Branson Henry (Leading Creek)

Commissioner Hart made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission to approve the applications as listed, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With all the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

3. Report on Fire Department Receiving 180 Days to Achieve Compliance.

ASFM Scott briefed the Committee on the Departments receiving 180 days.

- a) Silver Hill VFD
- b) Clay VFD
- c) Lizemore VFD
- d) Lakewood VFD
- e) Jacksonburg VFD

4. Consideration of Fire Department Recertification

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott presented the following departments for Recertification.

- a) Milton VFD
- b) Walton VFD
- c) Pricetown VFD
- d) West Union VFD
- e) New Cumberland VFD
- f) Leading Creek VFD
- g) Rivesville VFD
- h) Grant Town VFD
- i) Valley VFD
- j) Big Otter VFD
- k) Grandview VFD
- l) Jefferson VFD

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission the recertification of the listed departments, seconded by Commissioner Hart. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

5. Consideration of Fire Department with Perfect Evaluations Recertification.

ASFM Bradley Scott presented the following Departments with Perfect Evaluations for Recertification.

- a) Montgomery FD
- b) Wileyville VFD
- c) Paden City VFC
- d) Pine Grove VFD
- e) New Martinsville VFD
- f) Folsom VFD
- g) Wallace VFD
- h) Belmont VFD
- i) Bakerton VFD
- j) St. Mary's VFD
- k) Lubeck VFD

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission the recertification of the listed departments, noting their perfect evaluations, seconded by Commissioner Hart. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

6. Consideration of Wilderness VFD Substation Request.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to recommend to the Full Fire Commission the approval of the substation, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Adjournment

Having no additional business, Commissioner Mongold moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:13am without objection. Meeting adjourned.

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to accept the report as written, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

DRAFT

Disciplinary Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Minutes

December 5th, 2024

Call to Order

Commissioner Eastham called to order the regular meeting of the Disciplinary Committee at 10:14am on December 5th, 2024 at the Blennerhassett Hotel, Parkersburg WV.

Roll Call

The following commissioners were present:

Carl Eastham
Ted Shriver
Doug Mongold
Steven Byers (call in)
Edward George (call in)
Grant Gunnoe

The following commissioners were absent:

None

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

1. Consideration of Fire Chief Revocation.

- a) FDC 2024-027
- b) FDC 2024-028

Commissioner Gunnoe made a motion at 10:15am to enter Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and the nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Mongold made a motion at 12:15pm to leave Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Gunnoe. With the ayes and the nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Eastham noted to those in attendance that there were no actions or motions taken during the executive session. He also explained that the only thing being delt today is the original complaints FDC 2024-027 and FDC 2024-028 and that any additional complaints received today will go through the normal complaint process and those involved will be contacted by the Fire Marshal's office.

Commissioner Eastham asked if there was anyone who wished to speak at this time.

Jeffrey Allan Farris II with the Lenore VFD addressed the Committee in support of Chief Farris and noted the names of those who plan to withdraw from the department, should Chief Farris not be reinstated.

Christopher Haynes of the Lenore VFD spoke of the vast differences in uniforms, radios, equipment of the Lenore VFD in comparison to other departments. He feels in order to provide the best care to the community it is time for a new direction towards modernization by using the resources available.

Commissioner Gunnoe made a motion to recommend to the full Fire Commission that the Fire Marshal had the necessary facts to find probable cause for the temporary suspension of Chief Farris, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

Commissioner Mongold made a motion that based on the investigation a threat was made and to recommend to the full Fire Commission for action on FDC 2024-027 and FDC 2024-028, seconded by Commissioner Gunnoe. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Adjournment

Having no additional business, Commissioner Shriver, moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:24pm, without objection. Meeting adjourned.

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to accept the report as written, seconded by Commissioner White. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

Training Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Minutes

December 5th, 2024

Call to Order

Commissioner White called to order the regular meeting of the Training Committee at 12:26pm on December 5th, 2024 at the Blennerhassett Hotel in Parkersburg WV.

Roll Call

The following commissioners were present:

Virgil White
Jim Oldaker
Doug Estep
Tom Keefer
Dave Camp
Doug Mongold
Grant Gunnoe

The following commissioners were absent:

None

Unfinished Business

1. Review of list of WV Fire Service Approved Courses.

Commissioner Gunnoe made a motion to recommend to the full Fire Commission, to table the item until the February 2025 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Keefer. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

New Business

1. Public Service Training Report

No Report.

2. WVU-FSE Report

Mark Lambert reported that WVU-FSE will be doing an ICS 400 class the first week of January; Junior Camp will be the 14th to the 19th of June and they are hoping to have some national sponsorship; There will be a juvenile fire setter training with part 1 in February and part 2 in March; They are trying again for a fall weekend at the National Fire Academy; He also noted that he has been put on a National Committee for Recruitment and Retention and they will be having their first meeting next week.

3. Consideration of Blue to Gold LLC as an Approved Training Entity.

Commissioner White addressed the Committee explaining the request and Marshal Tyree noted the Statute that required the Fire Commission to approve the training program.

Commissioner Keefer made a motion to recommend to the full Fire Commission, the approval of the request, seconded by Commissioner Oldaker. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Adjournment

Having no additional business, Commissioner Mongold moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:42pm without objection. Meeting adjourned

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to accept the report as written, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

DRAFT

Recruitment and Retention Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 5th, 2024

Call to Order

Commissioner Oldaker called to order the regular meeting of the Recruitment and Retention Committee at 12:42pm on December 5th, 2024 at the Blennerhassett Hotel in Parkersburg WV.

Roll Call

The following commissioners were present:

Jim Oldaker
Doug Estep
Phil Hart
Doug Mongold
Grant Gunnoe

The following commissioners were absent:

Steven Byers (conference call disconnected)

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

2. Report on Committee Recommendations.

Commissioner Oldaker noted the recommendations of the Committee.

- a) Clean-up of the language in the Tax Credit bill and removal of the 30% participation requirement or written to a specific type of calls.
- b) Development of a LOSAP program similar to Maryland's.
- c) Work with WV DOE to expand firefighting training programs at the Career and Technical Centers along with additional funding for equipment and Personal Protective Equipment used in those programs.

Adjournment

Having no additional business, Commissioner Mongold, moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:53pm without objection. Meeting adjourned.

Commissioner White made a motion to accept the report as written, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

FULL COMMISSION MEETING

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

See FDS Report.

1) Consideration of Fayette County Fire Prevention Unit Request to be Recognized as a Fire Department.

Per the request of the Fayette County Fire Prevention Unit, the item was tabled at the October meeting and will be taken up again in the February meeting.

2) OSHA Statement Re: Emergency Response Rulemaking and Volunteer Emergency Responders.

Commissioner Keefer reported that following our last meeting we were unable arrange a meeting with the local OSHA office as they have been given a directive, they are not to entertain those meetings. Four weeks of testimony has been given and we are awaiting to see the outcome and expect to see major revisions.

3) Review of WV Fire Service Approved Courses List

See Training Report.

Commissioner Eastham made a motion to table the item until the February 2025 meeting, seconded by Commissioner White. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) Consideration of Temporary Fire Officer Certification.

See FDS Report

- a) Dave Fletcher (Belle)

Commissioner White made a motion to approve temporary certification as listed, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

2) Consideration of Fire Chief Applications.

See FDS Report.

- a) Dave Fletcher (Belle)
- b) Samantha Bice (Cheat Lake)
- c) Joseph Risten (McMechen)
- d) Theodore Sines (Jefferson County)
- e) Branson Henry (Leading Creek)

Commissioner Byers made a motion to approve applications as listed, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

3) Report on Fire Departments Receiving 180 Days to Achieve Compliance.

See FDS Report.

- a) Silver Hill VFD
- b) Clay VFD
- c) Lizemore VFD
- d) Lakewood VFD
- e) Jacksonburg VFD

No Action Taken

4) Consideration of Recertification of Fire Departments.

See FDS Report.

- a) Milton VFD
- b) Walton VFD
- c) Pricetown VFD
- d) West Union VFD
- e) New Cumberland VFD
- f) Leading Creek VFD
- g) Rivesville VFD
- h) Grant Town VFD
- i) Valley VFD
- j) Big Otter VFD
- k) Grandview VFD
- l) Jefferson VFD

Commissioner Eastham made a motion to recertify the listed departments, seconded by Commissioner White. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

5) Consideration of Perfect Evaluation Recertification of Fire Departments.

See FDS Report.

- a) Montgomery FD
- b) Wileyville VFD
- c) Paden City VFC
- d) Pine Grove VFD
- e) New Martinsville VFD
- f) Folsom VFD
- g) Wallace VFD
- h) Belmont VFD
- i) Bakerton VFD
- j) St. Mary's VFD
- k) Lubeck VFD

Commissioner White made a motion to recertify the departments noting their perfect evaluations, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

6) Consideration of Wilderness VFD Substation Request.

See FDS Report

Commissioner White made a motion to approve the substation, seconded by Commissioner Jones. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

7) Consideration Blue to Gold LLC as an approved Training entity.

See Training Report

Commissioner Eastham made a motion to approve the program, seconded by Commissioner White. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

8) Consideration of Recruitment and Retention Committee Recommendations.

See Recruitment and Retention Report

- a) Clean-up of the language in the Tax Credit bill and remove the 30% requirement.
- b) Development of a LOSAP program similar to Maryland's.
- c) Work with WV DOE to expand firefighting training programs at the Career and Technical Centers along with additional funding for equipment and Personal Protective Equipment used in those programs.

No action was taken. The Fire Marshal will reach back out to the Legislature to find out what steps they wish to be taken next.

9) Consideration of Fire Chief Revocation.

See Disciplinary Report

Commissioner Eastham made a motion that based on the facts presented the Fire Marshal had probable cause on FDC 2024-027 and FDC 2024-028 to temporarily suspend Chief Farris of Lenore VFD, seconded by Commissioner Oldaker. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Eastham made a motion that based upon the investigation it was found that a threat was made, and that action is necessary on FDC 2024-027 and 028, seconded by Commission Shriver. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote the motion passed.

Chairman Gunnoe noted that based on all the information from all parties involved and the subsequent investigation it was determined that the Commission needed to act.

Commissioner Eastham made a motion to send a letter to the governing board of Lenore VFD containing the following wording with edits as grammatically necessary:

Based on the investigation conducted by the State Fire Marshal's Office and the testimony taken by the West Virginia Fire Commission on December 5, 2024, at our meeting held in Parkersburg, West Virginia, the Fire Commission determined that a threat of bodily harm was made by Chief Farris toward Firefighter Marcum on a fire scene.

Therefore, we are requesting the governing board of the Lenore Volunteer Fire Department make a recommendation to the Fire Commission as to any action they feel is appropriate to take toward the Fire Chief.

The Fire Chief shall remain on temporary suspension until the Fire Commission receives the requested information from the governing board. This Commission is requesting that the board's recommendation be made by the board and submitted to the Fire Commission in writing.

In the written recommendation, any information as to who is on the board making the recommendation along with a copy of any minutes of the board meeting with a copy of the board's bylaws should also be provided to the Fire Commission.

seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Christopher Haynes of the Lenore VFD inquired about how the process will proceed.

Chairman Gunnoe noted that once that recommendation is received there will be a special meeting if necessary and all parties will be notified appropriately.

10) Election of Officers.

Commissioner Chairman Gunnoe called for nominations for the Election of New Fire Commissioner Officers for 2024.

Commissioner Mongold nominated Grant Gunnoe for the office of Chairman, seconded by Commissioner White. No other nominations were made, and nominations closed. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Eastham nominated Doug Mongold for the office of Vice Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Hart. No other nominations were made, and nominations closed. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner White nominated Ted Shriver for the office of Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. No other nominations were made, and nominations closed. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

11) Consideration of Teays Valley Volunteer Fire Department:

- a) **Request for Reconsideration Hearing.**
- b) **Request for Reconsideration of Boundary Alteration.**
- c) **Request for Stay of Decision.**

No action was taken on this item as per Teays Valley VFD's request the appeal was withdrawn.

SPEAKERS:

Cory Marcum with Lenore VFD thanked the Commission for the time and the job they do.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Potential meeting locations for April 2025 meeting: Princeton area, future dates Fire Academy.

TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING(S):

Committee Meetings - 10:00am Thursday, February 6th, 2025 and Commission Meeting 9:00am Friday, February 2025 at the TC Energy Building, Charleston WV.

Commissioner White made a motion to enter executive session at 9:58am, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commission White made a motion to leave executive session at 10:27am, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to adjourn at 10:28am without objection. Meeting adjourned.

DRAFT